

**VILLAGE OF ESSEX JUNCTION
PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES OF MEETING
January 17, 2013**

- MEMBERS PRESENT:** Liza Kilcoyne (Chairwoman); Diane Clemens, Nick Meyer, Aaron Martin. (David Nistico, John Alden, and Andrew Boutin were absent.)
- ADMINISTRATION:** Robin Pierce, Development Director.
- OTHERS PRESENT:** Chantal Beliveau, Brett Grabwoski, Greg Rabideau, David Robideau, Peter Cottrell, Patricia Cottrell, Michael Flaherty.
- AGENDA:**
1. Call to Order
 2. Audience for Visitors
 3. Additions/Amendments to the Agenda
 4. Approval of Minutes
 5. Public Meeting
 - Site Plan, Parish Hall, 4 Prospect Street, Holy Family Church
 6. Other Planning Commission Items
 7. Adjournment

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairwoman Liza Kilcoyne called the meeting to order at 6 PM.

2. AUDIENCE FOR VISITORS

Greg Rabideau re: Proposed Development at 4 Pearl Street

Greg Rabideau briefly reviewed a proposal to replace the former bank building on the corner of Pearl Street and Park Street with a mixed use structure (an application for the development has not yet been submitted). The parcel is approximately one acre in size. The proposed building will wrap around the corner and have underground parking, first floor retail/commercial space, and rental apartments above. There will be sidewalk and landscaping to create a meaningful streetscape. The project may be the catalyst to discontinue Park Terrace as a through road though this is not part of the proposal. The property owner is willing to work with the village on the matter. The curb cut on the Route 15 (Pearl Street) side of the property will be closed.

Robin Pierce noted the village owns the right-of-way for Park Terrace and can decide to close the road at any time. Presently the road has two-way traffic flow on a portion and one-way traffic flow on another portion. People tend to use the street as a means to avoid Five Corners and do so at excessive speeds going the wrong way on the one way portion of the street creating a dangerous situation. The street could be closed to through traffic and used as a bike/pedestrian connection which will solve several problems in the area and create a nice village environment for the residential portion of the street.

Nick Meyer asked about lot coverage and parking. Greg Rabideau stated the lot coverage is nearly 100% with about 100 parking spaces for the 36 residential units that are

planned. There is 17,000 s.f. of retail/commercial space so it may be necessary to share a small percentage of parking. Nick Meyer mentioned the need for a green space buffer between the parcel and the adjacent lot on Route 15 along with landscaping by the retail/commercial portion of the building to make the site attractive to potential tenants. Greg Rabideau assured the development will be compliant with the regulations.

3. ADDITIONS/AMENDMENTS TO THE AGENDA

None.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

January 3, 2013

MOTION by Diane Clemens, SECOND by Nick Meyer, to approve the minutes of 1/3/13 as presented. VOTING: unanimous (4-0); motion carried.

5. PUBLIC MEETING

Site Plan review to construct a 3,900 s.f. parish hall destroyed by fire with revised parking for Holy Family Church at 4 Prospect Street in the R-O/R-2 District by David Robideau, agent for Holy Family/St. Lawrence Charitable Trust, owner

David Robideau and Chantal Beliveau (Forcier Consulting Engineers) appeared on behalf of the application.

APPLICANT COMMENTS

David Robideau and Chantal Beliveau reviewed the project, highlighting the following:

- The former parish hall building located directly adjacent to Holy Family Church was destroyed by fire in 2011. The new building replaces the former building. The existing garage structure will be removed.
- The location for the new parish hall building is slightly farther away from the church, up on the hill and off the parking lot for better accessibility and to preserve the historic nature of the property and make the church the focal point. There will be views of Mount Mansfield from the parish hall building.
- The building will be served by new water service and the existing sewer service (sewer line is adjacent to the church). The water connection per the direction of the Fire Dept. is shown on the plan. The water system in the building will be upgraded. Sprinklers will be added. The water line that is currently in the parking lot will be extended to the new building.
- Some pavement will be added for accessibility and handicap parking. There will be a paved walkway from the church to the parish hall and ramps where necessary for access. The building will be fully accessible from the parking lot and the church. The building will have an inside elevator.
- Storm water mitigation includes a swale with crushed stone and vegetation by the building, pipes to catch and direct runoff from the building to proposed rain gardens (one in the middle of the parking lot and one in the front yard of the church). Plantings for the rain gardens are appropriate for Vermont rain gardens and will be colorful meadow plantings of a variety of flowers and grasses. The rain garden in the parking lot will capture building runoff and runoff from the top half of the parking lot. The rain garden on the church lawn

will capture remaining runoff. Storm water calculations show runoff from the site with the rain gardens is zero.

- Parking spaces in the parking lot will meet the standard requirements. The parking spaces will be perpendicular to the rain garden in the parking lot.
- The existing short sidewalk in the parking lot (installed by the school) will be extended to the parish hall. There is existing asphalt curbing along School Street that will remain in place.
- There are 12' high LED lights in the parking lot that will remain. One light will be relocated to where the original parish hall building stood to provide light for the handicap parking spaces in the upper parking lot. A lighting plan showing existing conditions is being done. Cut sheets on the type of light fixtures were submitted with the application.
- Cement fiberboard with vertical batten strips on the upper level of the new parish building is proposed. The lower level will be a thin stone veneer (if the budget allows). A steel metal roof is proposed. The color of the roof has not been finalized. The architects advised against having the building look like the church, but to have the building separate and distinct since the focal point on the parcel is to be the historic church. The intent of the location and design is to take advantage of views of Mount Mansfield so people can get a feel of Vermont when inside the building. Timber frame construction and native Vermont hardwood flooring will be used inside the building. The plan is to make the space welcoming and not feel institutional or like a classroom. Vertical clapboards were recommended to de-scale the building. The building was tucked into the hill so it would not stick out in the parking lot and to avoid removing mature trees on the site. The orientation is parallel to the south property line, not the church. The main entrance is visible from the parking lot.
- The property has many mature trees and is nicely landscaped. More plantings and some benches will be added by the mediation area.

There was discussion of the budget indicated for landscaping (\$23,000). The applicant clarified most of the money will be used for the rain gardens (plantings and excavation). The rain garden in the parking lot is approximately eight feet wide. Nick Meyer asked if the front end of the parking spaces will be marked to protect the rain garden. Chantal Beliveau said nothing is planned. Nick Meyer asked the distance from the parking lot to the front of the new building (approximately 20') and suggested lower height plantings in front of the building. The applicant will work with staff on landscaping items.

STAFF REPORT

The Planning Commission received a written staff report on the application, dated 1/17/13. Robin Pierce reported comments from the Village Engineer have been addressed except the lighting waiver requested by the applicant. The Village Engineer is concerned the existing lighting may not be to code and with the new parking lot configuration someone could drive into the rain garden. Staff will work with the applicant to ensure all requirements and standards are met with the application.

Chantal Beliveau explained the waiver request pertained to hiring an additional consultant to create a lighting plan of the existing fixtures which should be 'grandfathered' because no changes are proposed, but following further discussion the applicant is willing to hire a consultant to do the work and a lighting plan will be submitted.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Peter and Patricia Cottrell, Lincoln Street, spoke in favor of the proposal and the design of the building, noting there is a mix of architectural designs in the neighborhood and the landscaping on the church property is beautifully done and maintained. Mr. Cottrell said storm water runoff coming into his yard has been a problem in the past because the asphalt curb is in bad condition and should be fixed by the village. (David Robideau pointed out the storm water mitigation on the site will eliminate runoff down the parking lot driveway.) Peter and Patricia Cottrell stated the existing streetlights are very bright which is beneficial so having LED lighting will not be a problem.

There were no further comments.

MOTION by Liza Kilcoyne, SECOND by Nick Meyer, to close the public portion of the application by Holy Family Church. VOTING: unanimous (4-0); motion carried.

DELIBERATION/DECISION

Site Plan, Parish Hall, 4 Prospect Street, Holy Family Church

MOTION by Aaron Martin, SECOND by Liza Kilcoyne, to grant site plan approval to Holy Family Church, 4 Prospect Street, to construct a 3,900 s.f. parish hall with revised parking in the R-O/R-2 District and with the following recommendations:

1. All staff comments shall be addressed and satisfied prior to issuance of a permit.
2. All work shall comply with the Essex Junction Land Development Code.
3. The applicant shall work with staff on landscaping and plantings for the project.
4. The applicant shall work with staff on lighting levels in the parking lot in lieu of a waiver.

VOTING: unanimous (4-0); motion carried.

6. OTHER PLANNING COMMISSION ITEMS

Process for Village Plan

Staff reported an RFP is being prepared for a consultant to assist with the plan update.

7. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Liza Kilcoyne, SECOND by Nick Meyer, to adjourn the meeting.

VOTING: unanimous (4-0); motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:14 PM.

Rcdg Scty: MERiordan

